



# **REQUISITE COMPETENCIES FOR CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS IN SRI LANKA AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

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## Abstract

Over the last couple of decades, Information Technology (IT) has made a massive impact on the efficiency, competitiveness and the overall performance of business organizations worldwide. Having a competent Chief Information Officer (CIO) who is capable of leveraging technology as an enabler of the organization strategy and a source of innovation and growth can help businesses achieve long-term competitive advantage and sustenance.

Major international companies such as General Electric (GE), AT&T, SUN Microsystems, ICICI Bank & Microsoft all have technology savvy executives in their Management Boards. One commonality noted in some of the best companies in Sri Lanka, such as a leading blue chip telecommunication company and a leading software outsourcing company, is that they have highly technically competent CEOs at the helm.

Different CIOs may be equipped with their own set of different skills. However, it is undoubtedly important for CIOs to acquire the particularly necessary set of skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to build their competency to a higher level, thereby allowing them to act as catalysts to strategically and efficiently use the IT to improve business performance.

In general, in Sri Lanka, the recognition of the strategic impact of a CIO role is limited to a few industries such as the Garment manufacturing industry and the Telecommunication industry, as evident by the low rates of CIO empowerment. Yet, despite this low recognition of the strategic impact of a "Chief information Officer"; one research (Sarathchandra 2005) has identified that Sri Lankan companies do realize the importance CIOs involvement in strategic management.



Thus the impact of information technology for organizations to leverage ITIIS strategically to improve business performance and gain competitive advantage is very evident in both local and international contexts.

Considering the above facts, this empirical research, is based on an extensive literature review on the capabilities expected of CIOs and information systems sub-functions attempts to evaluate, (1) the set of competencies required of Sri Lankan CIOs and, (2) provide an understanding of the way CIO role should be formulated, such that it will have an impact on the strategy of Sri Lankan organizations.

It is envisioned that the recommendations of this study will provide the necessary information to the Sri Lankan education sector and other professional organizations to formulate their MBA/MSc curriculums and IT/IS syllabuses, in order to build the necessary environment to nurture and build future CIOs for Sri Lanka. Furthermore, policy makers and the private sector community will also stand to benefit from the recommendations of this study.